

Appl. No. : 09/767,207
Filed : January 22, 2001

REMARKS

Claims 51-60 and 70 stand rejected. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that Claims 61-69, 71, and 72 are allowed. Applicant has amended Claims 51-56, 58, 61, 63, 64, 67, 68, and 70. Applicant has added new Claims 73 through 83. Thus, Claims 51-65 and 67-83 are pending in the application and are presented for reconsideration and further examination in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Objections

Claims 51, 52, 61, 64, and 68 were objected to for informalities relating to the phrases "a retainer" and "including." Applicant has amended Claims 51 and 52 to replace the phrase "a retainer" with the phrase "the retainer." Claims 61, 64, and 68 were amended to replace the phrase "including" with "include." Applicant respectfully submits that the objections to the claims have been overcome. Also, Applicant has made several additional amendments to the claims in order to more particular point out the subject matter of the claims. These amendments are fully supported by the specification as filed and are not made in response to any rejection.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd Paragraph

Claims 51-60 and 70 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 51 was rejected for having insufficient antecedent basis for the phrase "the proximal end." Claim 52 was rejected for having insufficient antecedent basis for the phrase "the axis." Claims 53 through 55 were rejected for having insufficient antecedent basis for the phrases "the distal end" and "the proximal end." Claim 70 was rejected for having insufficient antecedent basis for the phrase "the distal portion." Applicant has amended Claims 51 through 55 and 70 so that the claims include the proper antecedent basis.

Claims 56 through 60 were rejected as being unclear due to the phrase "extending outwardly and generally in an axial direction" in independent Claim 56. Applicant has replaced the phrase "extending outwardly and generally in an axial direction" with the phrase "extending outwardly relative to an outer surface of the elongated body and extending generally in a longitudinal direction." By this amendment, Applicant intends to specify that the contact member extends away from the outer surface of the elongated body and that the contact member

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has at least a discernable thickness as measured in the longitudinal direction. Applicant has also amended the geometric description of the contact member on the receptacle in a similar manner. In view of these amendments, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claim 56 and dependent Claims 57 through 60 fully comply with the requirements of § 112, second paragraph.

New Claims 73 through 83

New dependent Claims 73 through 83 have been added. Applicant submits that these claims are patentable for at least the reasons that the claims from which they depend are patentable over the applied art. Consideration and allowance of new Claims 73 through 83 therefore is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action are inapplicable to the present claims. Accordingly, early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is most earnestly solicited.

Any claim amendments which are not specifically discussed in the above remarks are not made for patentability purposes, and it is believed that the claims would satisfy the statutory requirements for patentability without the entry of such amendments. Rather, these amendments have only been made to increase claim readability, to improve grammar, and to reduce the time and effort required of those in the art to clearly understand the scope of the claim language.

The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the noted rejections and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if an issue requires clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicant's attorney in order to resolve any such issue promptly.


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Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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